

Message Text

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42

ACTION SY-05

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 OC-06 CCO-00 OPR-02 SYE-00

(ISO) W

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P R 301410Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 1929

AMCONSUL KARACHI

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 7778

DEPT FOR A/SY/FO; KARACHI FOR RSS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ASEC, LE, AEMR

SUBJECT: PERSONNEL/POUCH TO DAMASCUS

1. RSO DISCUSSED WITH HIS PLO SECURITY CONTACT THE POSSIBILITY OF OBTAINING A SECURITY ESCORT FOR A PERSONNEL/CLASSIFIED POUCH RUN TO DAMASCUS DURING PERIOD 1-3 OCTOBER. THE CONTACT STATED THAT IT WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE AS THE ALEY/SOFAR ROUTE WAS TOO DANGEROUS AT PRESENT TIME. RSO ALSO QUESTIONED POSSIBILITY OF USING NABATIYA/MARJAYOUN ROUTE. PLO STATED THAT THIS ROUTE WAS ALSO TOO DANGEROUS AND THAT THEY COULD NOT "ACCEPT THE RESPONSIBILITY" FOR OUR SECURITY. HE SAID FURTHER THAT THE SECURITY SITUATION IN GENERAL WAS TOO UNSTABLE AT PRESENT TIME AND THAT HE WOULD CONTACT RSO WHEN CONDITIONS IMPROVED SUFFICIENTLY FOR A ROAD CONVOY OVER EITHER ROUTE.

2. IT IS APPARENT THAT AS FAR AS PLO IS CONCERNED THE SOFAR ROAD IS CLOSED AT LEAST TEMPORARILY AND THAT THEY ARE TAKING WAIT-AND-SEE ATTITUDE IN REGARD TO MARJAYOUN ROUTE. EMBASSY WILL CONTINUE TO MONITOR EVENTS, AND AS SOON AS MILITARY STABILITY

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RETURNS, WILL AGAIN ATTEMPT TO SCHEDULE PERSONNEL/

CLASSIFIED POUCH RUN.

3. FOR A/SY/FO: FOR E&E PLANNING PURPOSES, THIS
REFUSAL TO PROVIDE AN ESCORT REFLECTS PAST EXPERIENCE
WITH PLO DURING ANY PERIOD OF HEIGHTENED MILITARY OR
POLITICAL ACTIVITY. RSO SERIOUSLY DOUBTS THAT, SHOULD
A SITUATION ARISE WHICH WOULD REQUIRE EVACUATION FROM
BEIRUT OF REMAINING OFFICIAL AMERICANS, AN ESCORT
COULD BE OBTAINED FROM PLO FOR AN OVERLAND CONVOY.
THEY SIMPLY WILL NOT ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY UNLESS
SECURITY SITUATION IS STABLE AND THEY ARE CONVINCED
THAT DANGER IS MINIMAL.
LANE

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NNN

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